

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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TAGS: PINS, SHUM, PLAB, CT
SUBJ: MESAN'S PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

1. IN ORDER TO DEMONSTRATE OUR ONGOING INTEREST IN THE POLITICAL EVOLUTION OF THE EMPIRE, I CALLED MARCH 13 ON MINISTER OF STATE DA SILVA, WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CAE'S SOLE POLITICAL PARTY - MESAN. WE DISCUSSED PLANS FOR NATIONAL ELECTIONS, MESAN'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES AND THE FUTURE OF THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT.

2. DA SILVA CONFIRMED THAT PLANS FOR NATIONAL ELECTIONS WERE ADVANCING ON SCHEDULE. ON APRIL 2 THE FIRST VILLAGE LEVEL ELECTIONS WILL TAKE PLACE TO CHOOSE MEMBERS OF LOCAL PARTY COMMITTEES. UNIVERSAL ADULT SUFFRAGE WILL BE THE RULE. BALLOTING WILL BE BY SHOW OF HANDS. ON SUCCESSIVE SUNDAYS ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD FOR THE HIGHER TIERS OF THE MESAN STRUCTURE, AT THE COMMUNE, SOUS PREFECTURE AND PREFECTURE LEVELS. VOTING WILL BE INDIRECT, WITH ONLY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEES OF IMMEDIATELY LOWER TIERS VOTING. ALL PARTY STRUCTURES ARE TO BE IN PLACE BY THE END OF MAY. FOLLOWING THIS PROCESS NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS WILL TAKE PLACE BETWEEN JUNE AND SEPTEMBER. ALL ADULTS 18 YEARS OLD AND ABOVE QILL BE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE. BALLOTS WILL BE SECRET. PREFECTS AND SUB-PREFECTS ARE ALREADY INSTRUCTED

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TO DRAW UP THE VOTING ROLLS AND CANDIDATES ARE BEING SOUGHT. DA SILVA SAID IT WAS HIS HOPE THAT THERE WOULD BE MULTIPLE CANDIDATES FOR EACH SEAT, BUT A DECISION ON THIS POINT HAD NOT YET BEEN TAKEN BY THE EMPEROR.

3. DA SILVA ALSO COMMENTED ON THE EXTENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANS OF MESAN. THIS YEAR IT WOULD HAVE A BUDGET OF 768

MILLION CFA (SLIGHTLY MORE THAN \$3 MILLION). OVER ONE-HALF OF THE BUDGET WOULD GO FOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS PARTICULARLY IN AGRICULTURE. A TOTAL OF TWELVE COMPANIES ARE EVENTUALLY TO BE SET UP WITH INITIAL CAPITAL RANGING FROM ONE TO FOUR MILLION DOLLARS. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND FEASIBILITY STUDIES ARE BEING SOUGHT FROM A RANGE OF FOREIGN COUNTRIES (EGYPT, YUGOSLAVIA, ITALY, LIBYA, JAPAN, GERMANY, SOUTH KOREA, MOROCCO AND BELGIUM), BUT NOT FROM THE U.S. IN ADDITION, SIX WELFARE SOCIETIES ARE TO BE CREATED TO PROMOTE EDUCATION, HEALTH AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (FOR WHICH IRAQ, IRAN, THE GULF STATES, ROMANIA, GERMANY, FRANCE AND CHINA ARE TO HELP); AGAIN WE ARE NOT ON THE LIST. DA SILVA WAXED ELOQUENT ABOUT THE DYNAMISM WHICH MESAN WOULD BE INJECTING INTO THE ECONOMY THROUGH THESE INSTITUTIONS, THOUGH HE ADMITTED IT WOULD TAKE TEN YEARS TO IMPLEMENT THEM ALL FULLY.

4. NOTING THAT HE HAD RECENTLY ADDRESSED A MEETING OF CENTRAL AFRICAN WORKERS, I ASKED DA SILVA WHAT WAS THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE NATIONAL TRADE UNION ORGANIZATION, THE UGTC. HE RESPONDED THAT IT WAS STILL SUSPENDED. HOWEVER, THE FORMER HEAD HAD BEEN RESTORED TO FAVOR AS MAYOR OF BANGUI (BANGUI 0444) AND DA SILVA SAID THAT HE THOUGHT A NEW AND REFORMED TRADE UNION STRUCTURE WOULD SOON BE ANNOUNCED.

5. COMMENT: THERE IS A LARGE ELEMENT OF FANTASY AND WISHFUL THINKING INVOLVED IN MESAN. MOST OF ITS SCHEMES, RANGING FROM LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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A YOUTH CORPS TO COFFEE PLANTATIONS, ARE NEVER LIKELY TO SEE THE LIGHT OF DAY. PLANS AND PROJECTS WILL BE DRAWN UP, FOREIGN DONORS WILL BE PURSUED, BUT IN THE END THE RESULTS ARE LIKELY TO BE MEAGRE. THE ONE PROJECT WHICH WILL PROBABLY SUCCEED IS THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW, AND ONE SUPPOSES MAGNIFICENT, HEADQUARTERS BUILDING AT BERENGO. THE CHINESE CHARGE WHO IMMEDIATELY PRECEDED ME WAS ASKED TO COME UP WITH THE PLANS (AND PRESUMABLY THE MONEY) FOR THE NEW BUILDING. HAPPILY WE DO NOT SEEM TO BE MAJOR TARGETS OF MESAN'S FUND RAISING EFFORTS, THOUGH DA SILVA DID GIVE ME A NUMBER OF MESAN DOCUMENTS ON THE PROJECTS DESCRIBED ABOVE (A COPY IS BEING POUCHED TO AF/C), WHICH HE ASKED ME TO STUDY.

6. THE OTHER CONCRETE ACHIEVEMENT THIS YEAR WILL BE THE CREATION OF AN ELECTORAL STRUCTURE. IT IS CLEAR THAT BOKASSA WILL PLAY A KEY ROLE IN CHOOSING CANDIDATES, WHO ARE LIKELY TO BE LOCAL NOTABLES WITH IMPECCABLY LOYAL RECORDS. NONETHELESS A CERTAIN POLITICIZATION OF INSTITUTIONS IN THE CAE IS BEGINNING, WHICH OVER TIME MAY DEVELOP A LIFE OF THEIR OWN. QUAINTON

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